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**Current Stem Cell Policy is Causing U.S. Researchers  
to Lose Ground to Other Countries**

Dear Colleague,

I would like to bring your attention to the attached article entitled "Experts: U.S. Behind in Stem Cell Research" that appeared in the *Wisconsin State Journal* on Friday, April 22, 2005.

As the article details, the President's restrictive embryonic stem cell policy is hindering U.S. research to the point where our scientists are falling behind their counterparts in other countries. According to speakers at the fourth annual International Bioethics Forum, other countries with more relaxed regulations are working with newer and better stem cell lines. Meanwhile, U.S. researchers continue to face serious obstacles to furthering their research, including restricted federal funding.

The current embryonic stem cell policy must be changed. We can no longer tie the hands of our scientists when millions of lives are at stake. We hope you will join us in cosponsoring H.R. 810, the Castle-DeGette "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act." This bill provides for an expanded embryonic stem cell research policy and requires that strong ethical standards be implemented. For more information, contact Elizabeth Pika at (202) 225-2906.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress

## **EXPERTS: U.S. BEHIND IN STEM CELL RESEARCH ; SPEAKERS SAY RESTRICTIONS CAUSE U.S. TO LOSE GROUND TO OTHER COUNTRIES.**

Ron Seely  
Wisconsin State Journal  
22 April 2005

Despite the medical promise of human embryonic stem cells, the U.S. is falling behind other countries in such research because of government restrictions on use of the controversial cells, according to speakers Thursday at the fourth annual International Bioethics Forum.

Alice Page, a Madison lawyer who works for LaFollette Godfrey & Kahn and specializes in the ethics of human subjects research, said many other countries, especially in Asia, have much more relaxed regulations and are already working with newer and better stem cell lines.

"Western prominence in the field is certainly being challenged," Page said.

Page spoke on international policies on human embryonic stem cell research at the forum, held at the Promega Corp. in Fitchburg. She was joined by Sonali Srivastava, a patent lawyer with LaFollette Godfrey & Kahn who specializes in international issues related to patents.

Srivastava provided an in-depth look at India, which has an extensive stem cell regulatory system yet allows the derivation of new human embryonic stem cells both from surplus embryos at fertility clinics and from cloned embryos. The country, she said, is also investing heavily in training for chemists and biologists to work with the stem cells.

Researchers are enthused about the promise of human embryonic stem cells because the cells have not yet started to change into any of the various tissues that build the different parts of the human body. Scientists hope to learn how to guide the cells to grow into healthy replacement cells for those damaged by disease and injury.

But use of human embryonic stem cells is controversial because the cells are initially taken from embryos that are about to be discarded from fertility clinics. Patients from the clinics give permission to use the excess embryos, which are destroyed in the process.

Because of this, President Bush has restricted federal funding for research on the cells to a limited number of lines, or colonies, that were in existence as of Aug. 9, 2001. Critics say the policy cripples research efforts in this country, especially because new stem cell lines will be necessary if research on potential cures are to move into human trials.

Page said some countries have equally or more restrictive regulations, largely depending on religious belief and history. In Germany, for example, tight restrictions are rooted at least partly in fears about the abuse of science stemming from Nazi human experimentation during World War II and the attempt to create a master race.

Other countries, however, are forging ahead with the science because of less heavy-handed regulation. Such countries include:

- \* United Kingdom. The country is the leader in cloning and embryonic stem cell research, according to Page, and allows the derivation of new stem cell lines both from fertility clinics and cloning.

- \* China. This giant is unique, Page said, in its quest to put experimental stem cell therapies into clinical practice. The country allows derivation of new stem cell lines not only from embryos from fertility clinics but also from aborted or miscarried fetuses.

- \* South Korea. The country is known for its aggressive production of new stem cell lines. In 2004, South Korea cloned the first human embryos from which stem cells for research were obtained.